

Editorial: Time to publication

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Once the research is completed and the manuscript is written, authors understandably want to see their work published and available for others to read and admire as quickly as possible. This desire for quick publication is one of the incentives offered by predatory journals to persuade unwary authors to submit their work and pay the article publishing charges. I recently received an email offering to publish my work within 48 hours of submission! (Admittedly, the publisher did not say anything about the peer reviewing process they used, or whether they carried out any copy-editing or other quality checks.)

Much of the 'time to first decision' - the time between initial submission and the decision by the editor to accept, reject, or ask for revisions - is taken up with the reviewing process. The journal needs to find suitable reviewers, wait for them to complete the review and send in their comments. Then the editor needs to read those comments carefully and make a decision. We are fortunate in having members of the Reviewer Panel who are (usually) quick to respond, but we still have to wait until the slowest reviewer uploads their comments.

The average time to first decision for *Education & Self Development* is currently 48 days. Remember that this is the *average* time: some authors will get their decision more quickly while others may have to wait longer. It is longer than we would like but we are in the hands of the reviewers and, despite gentle reminders, some delays occur. Our system of holding regular auctions of manuscripts looking for reviewers, saves some time because we do not have to wait for reviewers to confirm that they are willing and able to carry out the review, and then find alternatives when reviewers have to decline the task.

If the decision is to ask for revisions (as it often is!) then we have to wait for the authors to revise and this too may take several months. Usually, the manuscript has to be reviewed again but this phase of second review is typically quicker than the first round.

The other reason for delay is that, in our current system we assemble all the articles for a print issue of the journal and then publish all of them together. However, we have now revised our processes so that we can publish articles online shortly after they have been accepted.

The new process works like this: Once the article has been accepted for publication it will be copy-edited and the edited article will be sent back to the author(s) for approval. This is just to check that the copy-editing has not distorted the meaning and is not an opportunity for the authors to revise the work for a final time! It will then be typeset in the correct format for *Education & Self Development* and the pdf file will be uploaded to the Journal website in English and Russian. It will be given a publication date and a DOI which will not change later. The article can then be discovered through the usual search engines and cited.

Four times each year (our print publication frequency) the articles will be assembled into a Journal Issue with a volume and issue number. The editorial and contents page will be added and the issue printed as usual.

We hope that this new process will enable us to make significant reductions in the time between submission and publication, thus serving our authors and the research community better.